

MANON LESCAUT
IN
FICTION AND DRAMA.

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Nature of the Study.

The purpose of this study is to show in how far the dramatized versions adhere to l'abbé Prévost's work. This study is concerned with the three librettos which it has been possible to obtain at this time: namely,

'Manon Lescaut,' written by Scribe in 1856, opera by Auber.

'Manon Lescaut,' written by Meilhac and Gille, in 1884, opera by Massenet.

'Manon Lescaut,' written by Puccini and a committee of friends in 1893, opera by Puccini.

Because the libretto by Scribe departs so much from the novel, it has seemed more fitting to place it at the last, than in its chronological order.

Other dramatizations: namely, an opera by Halévy, written in 1830, an opera by Balfe, written in 1836, and two plays of slight importance will be briefly noted on page 72.

Biographical Notice.

Antoine-François Prévost, called Prévost d'exiles, was born April 1, 1697, of an old family of Artois, living at Hesdin. His first education was received at the Jesuit School of his native city. Later he went to the Collège d'Harcourt at Paris. From 1713 to 1715, he made his novitiate at the Jesuit house of Paris and passed the following year, 1716, in the class of philosophy in their college of La Flèche. This first ardor was not very profound for he abandoned his school at the end of his year in philosophy and joined the army as a simple volunteer in the troops of Louis XIV. Advancement was slow and he soon returned to the Jesuit School of La Flèche, only to leave it and enter the service the second time; after obtaining a commission as lieutenant he abandoned himself to pleasure until a mistress for whom he had a most ardent passion, deceived him and he left the service and made his novitiate with the Benedictines of Saint-Maur, taking his vows at the abbey of Saint-Pierre at Jumièges, November 9, 1721. These are the dates found in Harrisse's *l'Abbé Prévost, Histoire de sa vie et de ses oeuvres* (1). Sainte-Beuve (2) and Brunetière (3) also give the date of his profession as 1721, but that of his enlistment as 1713. After leaving Jumièges he went to the abbey of Saint-Ouen at Rouen, studied philosophy at the famous abbey of Bec-Hellouin; the year 1725 to 1726 he spent at the abbey of Fécamp and was then sent to the col-

lege of Saint-Germer to teach. In 1726 he preached at Evreux for a year, later going to the abbey of Saint-Martin d'Alençon of Sées, then to the Blancs-Manteaux at Paris; and in 1728 he went to the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where it is sometimes claimed that he wrote nearly a volume of the 'Gallia Christiana' and also several volumes of his first novel, 'Les Aventures d'un homme de qualité, qui s'est retiré du monde.' Harriese(1) proves that the statement in regard to the 'Gallia Christiana' is false, for the only volume of the 'Gallia' published during Prévost's sojourn at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, is the volume IV (Diocese of Lyons) which appeared towards the end of 1728, and as it forms a huge volume of 720 pages, the printing would have begun before Prévost could have worked there. Harriese believes that Prévost may have contributed in a limited way to volume V, published in 1731, for it was the practice to employ young priests to do secondary work upon this collection. In 1728 his friends influenced him into seeking another branch of the Order of Saint Benedict, which would give him more liberty. The brief authorizing the transfer was granted at Rome and transmitted to Monseigneur Sabbatier, Evêque d'Amiens, who sent for Prévost, but before the latter had come to receive it,

a relative of his, M. Dargnies, grand Pénitencier du diocèse d'Amiens, advised postponement. Prévost, failing to receive the brief at the expected time, nevertheless left Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and after learning that the 'Superieurs' of Saint-Maur had asked for his arrest he took refuge in England where he remained until 1729, continuing to write the 'Mémoires d'un homme de qualité, qui s'est retiré du monde,' and serving as tutor in a rich family. In 1729 he went to Holland where he finished the 'Mémoires.' In 1731 at the Hague, he published 'Manon Lescaut' and 'Le Philosophe anglois ou Histoire de Monsieur Cleveland, fils naturel de Cromwell.' While at the Hague he had some unpleasant adventures and was obliged to return to England in 1733. At this time he founded the periodical 'Le Pour et Contre', which was published from 1733 to 1740. This journal contained articles on science, arts, books, authors and contributed largely to acquaint the people of France with English customs. In 1734 l'abbé Prévost returned to France and through the leniency of the Benedictines, entered the abbey of La Croix-Saint-Leufroy where he made his second novitiate and then became chaplain of the prince of Conti. From 1734 to 1741, except for his 'Le Pour et Contre' to which he furnished some articles each week, Prévost published only the first volumes of 'Doyen de Killerine'

and the three last volumes of 'Cleveland'. In 1741 he was exiled at Brussels because of some articles which he was accused of writing for a gazette containing some scandalous reports. He denied the accusation and finally obtained his pardon and returned to Paris in 1742 and published his translation of Richardson's Pamela, the same year. In 1746 he went to Chaillot to continue his writing. While there he frequented the salons of Mme de Créquy, of Mme Doublet and the reunions of Müssard at Passy where he knew Rousseau. In 1751 he published Clarissa Harlowe and in 1753, Grandison, his two last translations of Richardson's novels. In 1754 he obtained the priory of Saint-Georges de Gesne. During the year 1755 he was director of the periodical the 'Journal Étranger'. In the last four years of his life, he published his translation of Hume's 'Histoire de la Maison de Stuart', 1760, 'Le Monde Moral', 1760, a new novel (C'est une compilation d'historiettes du temps) of which only two parts were published. In 1761 he published 'Les Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la vertu,' a translation of the 'Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph,' written by Frances Sheridan, mother of the celebrated Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and published in London.

A short while before he died he bought a house at Saint-Firmin, near Chantilly, where he led a quiet life. During the first part of his stay he wrote 'l'Histoire de la Maison of Condé et de Conty.' He died at Courteuil the 25th. of November 1763.

His death has been the cause of many romantic stories, one told by La Place who says that the author of 'Cleveland' was struck by apoplexy in the forest of Chantilly and was carried to the house of a priest in the neighboring village and his death was caused by an incision which the doctor made. While Sainte-Beuve(1), Larousse(2) and others give this account of his death, La Grande Encyclopédie (3) and Harrisse (4), as well as l'abbé Blanchelande, brother of Prévost (5), relate the facts as told in the following obituary notice given by 'l'Almanach Historique de l'Artois pour l'année bissextile 1764 (6); "Ce célèbre écrivain (l'abbé Prévost) partit le jour de sa mort après avoir diné, d'une maison qu'il habitoit à St. Firmin, pour aller seul et à pied se promener jusqu' à Saint Nicolas, Prieuré de Bénédictins de l'ordre de Cluni, situé à trois petits quarts de lieue de sa demeure. Comme il s'en retournoit, des paysans qui travailloient près du chemin, s'apperçurent qu'il chanceloit et

coururent à lui. Il leur dit: A moi, mes amis, je me meurs; et il ajouta: Seigneur, pardonnez-moi mes fautes; mais il tomba mort avant que ces paysans eussent pu le joindre. Son corps ayant été ouvert, on trouva dans la poitrine une grosse veine rompue, dont le sang avait inondé cette partie (rupture d'un anévrisme) Harriette (1). This account of Prévost's death makes it quite possible that La Place invented his story.

L'abbé Prévost has published many books, (see appendix), but he is scarcely known to the public except by his 'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut', the only one which merits to survive. Gustave Planche (2) expresses its value as follows; "Les oeuvres telles que Manon Lescaut, revêtues du sceau de la vérité, jouissent d'une longue popularité parmi les classes lettrées et illettrées, malgré la vulgarité de plusieurs détails, malgré l'incorrection du langage; et cette popularité n'a rien d'illégitime, car elle repose sur le fondement même de toute poésie, sur l'analyse et la peinture des passions humaines. Les caprices de la mode ne peuvent rien sur de telles oeuvres; le culte exclusif du moyen âge peut succéder au goût de l'antiquité grecque sans discréditer la valeur de ces simples récits. Écrite avec une pureté constante, l'histoire

de Manon Lescaut prenait place parmi les plus précieux monuments de l'imagination française. Malgré les taches qu'une attention sévère ne manque pas d'y découvrir, elle doit être proposée comme sujet d'étude à tous ceux qui ont l'ambition de connaître et de retracer les joies et les angoisses du cœur."

We see in 'Manon Lescaut' a master piece on account of its intense reality. Perhaps no one has analysed as well as Maupassant the reasons why 'Manon Lescaut' will remain one of the purest gems in the history of literature.

"Voici Manon Lescaut, plus vraiment femme que toutes les autres, naïvement rouée, perfide, aimante, troublante, spirituelle, redoutable et charmante. En cette figure si pleine de séduction et d'instinctive perfide, l'écrivain semble avoir incarné tout ce qu'il y a de plus gentil, de plus entraînant, et de plus infâme dans l'être féminin. Manon, c'est la femme toute entière, telle qu'elle a toujours été, telle qu'elle est et telle qu'elle sera toujours." (1)

Prévost is perhaps the first in France who writes under the simple dictation of things. He is concerned more with representing the truth than with his manner of representing it. He writes in a flowing, easy style, with no trace of affectation and very little

rhetoric.

"Ce que nous voulons seulement indiquer, c'est que les romans de l'abbé Prévost, leur intensité dramatique, d'une invention si soutenue, les sentiments qu'ils dépeignent, leur accent de sincérité et leur style, déterminèrent une impulsion dont la littérature française s'est ressentie pendant plus d'un siècle. Certains romans de Victor Hugo en furent la manifestation dernière." (Harriese 1)

Date of the Novel.

One of the questions which has been raised many times in regard to 'Manon Lescaut', is the date of its first publication. Henry Harrisse (1) shows that 'Manon Lescaut' appeared at Amsterdam in 1731 as volume VII of Prévost's 'Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité, qui s'est retiré du monde.' (Vignette). A Amsterdam aux dépens de la Compagnie. MDCCXXI," and that (2) "La Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savants de l'Europe annonce dans son fascicule trimestriel d'avril 1731" that the "Compagnie des libraires associés d'Amsterdam imprime la Suite des Mémoires d'un homme de qualité, qui s'est retiré du monde, in-douze, trois volumes. "These are volumes V, VI, and VII, given in continuation of the volume I, II, III and IV, published in Amsterdam the preceding year. Of this publication the widow Delaulne printed and published in Paris in the same year volumes V and VI omitting 'Manon Lescaut', which was again omitted in the Basle or Frankfort reprint in 1732. On the other hand during the summer of 1733, a printer at Rouen made an edition of volume VII without publishing the first six volumes, and this publication had a great deal

of success (1). This agrees with Schroeder's statement that there is no record of 'Manon Lescaut' in France until 1733, when an edition was published at Rouen (2). Sainte-Beuve (3), Morillot (4), and La Grande Encyclopédie (5), all give the date of the 'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut' as the seventh volume of the 'Mémoires' published in 1731 at the Hague, while Doumic gives the date as 1733 (6), and Larousse (7) observes that l'abbé Prévost published his 'Mémoires' in 1728-1732, 8 vol. in-12, during his stay in Holland, and that it was while he was in England that he finished publishing 'l'Histoire de M. Cleveland,' and then gave to the world in 1733, his master-piece 'Manon Lescaut'. Brunetière comments (8); "Manon Lescaut a bien paru pour la première fois en 1731. Que si d'ailleurs on s'étonnait, comme nous-même quand nous avons examiné le point, qu'aucun journaliste à Paris n'eût parlé du roman au moment de son apparition, que les pires ennemis de Prévost n'en semblent avoir eu connaissance que deux ans plus tard, et qu'enfin la police elle-même n'ait fait saisir le livre qu'en 1733, la réponse est facile. Manon Lescaut n'eut point tout à fait le succès que l'on a dit quelquefois, et, pendant tout le siècle

ne fut pas estimée au-dessus de Cleveland et du Doven de Killerine."

In discussing the time at which 'Manon Lescaut' was written, Harris (1) is of the opinion that it was composed while Prévost was a fugitive in England during the years 1728-1730, but he admits a possibility of its having been written in 1722-1723, while Prévost was at the abbey of Saint-Ouen.

George R. Havens (2) in his article on 'The Date of Composition of Manon Lescaut' inclines towards the earlier date, for the unhappy love affair which furnished the basis for the novel must have come during the years 1719-1721, before Prévost was admitted to the Benedictine order. Schroeder (3) believes that the love affair which inspired the novel is the one which Prévost had while in Holland. But according to other dates found in Pierre Heinrich's 'L'abbé Prévost et la Louisiane,' the love affair must have taken place before 1719 or 1720, preceding the taking of his vows, November 9, 1721.

It is interesting to note that until 1753 the title remained 'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut.' This would seem to be the natural title as Des Grieux is the important personage of the book (Brunetière 4).

The Sources of Manon Lescaut.

The intense reality of 'Manon Lescaut' leaves every one ready to believe that l'abbé Prévost took the characters from life and it is interesting to note how many writers have tried to prove that this may be true.

Henry Harrisse (1) says; "Quand Prévost revient pénitent à la maison paternelle en 1720, c'est l'époque où, sans doute, il connut ces joies et ces chagrins d'amour dont nous tenons absolument à retrouver le récit dans l'émouvante 'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut.' Il s'appliqua, dit Palissot, à peindre le torrent des passions dont il avait éprouvé l'empire. Ses couleurs furent d'autant plus fortes qu'elles étaient vraies et prises dans son cœur. Efforçons-nous, à notre tour, de satisfaire à ce désir si naturel du lecteur, mais sans prétendre sortir de l'hypothèse probable. Le moment était venu pour le jeune Prévost d'embrasser une carrière. Il était alors âgé de vingt-deux ans. La vie des camps n'avait pu éteindre les sentiments religieux qui sommeillaient au fond de son cœur, et c'est vers l'Eglise qu'une fois encore il tourna ses regards. Sa famille forma le projet de le faire entrer dans l'ordre

de Malte, qui convenait à son humeur aventureuse. Bien que n'appartenant aucunement à la noblesse, Prévost n'était pas si mal partagé du côté de la naissance et de la fortune qu'il ne pût espérer d'obtenir une place dans la milice chrétienne. Un de ses parents, M. Dargnies, grand pénitencier du diocèse d'Amiens, devait être en rapports suivis avec le chevalier Foville d'Escrainville, commandeur de Loison, qui, du chef de cette commanderie en Artois, avait des censives et des droits de dîmes sur certaines terres à Ergny, son pays d'origine. On a tout lieu de croire que, sur l'avis de son père, Prévost se rendit à Amiens pour solliciter de M. Dargnies ses conseils et son appui. Il y retrouva le plus dévoué et le plus sage des amis, bien connu aujourd'hui de tout lecteur de romans, sous le pseudonyme de Tiberge. Les deux jeunes gens étaient, certain jour, à se promener lorsque arriva le coche d'Arras. Ils le suivirent par curiosité jusqu'à l'auberge où la voiture s'arrêtait, sans autre dessein que de savoir de quelles personnes elle était remplie. Il en sortit quelques femmes qui se dispersèrent aussitôt; une seule, fort jeune, demeura dans la cour, pendant qu'un homme d'un âge avancé, qui paraissait lui servir de conducteur, s'empressait pour faire tirer son équipage des paniers. Elle était charmante..... Et Prévost se trouva enflammé tout d'un coup jusqu'au

transport et à la folie. Il s'approche d'elle. Il apprend qu'elle se nomme Manon Lescaut. Il lui demande ce qui l'amène à Amiens. Elle répond ingénument qu'elle y est envoyée par ces parents pour devenir religieuse. Ils la mettaient au couvent malgré elle et pour arrêter sans doute, dit Prévost, son penchant au plaisir qui s'était déjà déclaré. Une telle indication, la naissance commune de Manon, cette présence d'esprit chez une fille si jeune et l'aveu qu'elle se trouvait flattée d'avoir fait la conquête d'un fils de famille, portent à se demander si c'est véritablement dans un monastère que son vieux compagnon était chargé de la conduire. Les deux jeunes gens tombèrent vite d'accord; et le lendemain les voyait en route pour Paris, Manon dans une chaise de poste, lui galopant à la portière. D'abord, un bonheur parfait, aussi longtemps que l'argent dure. Et puis viennent les dettes, la gêne, les avanies des créanciers. La tristesse et les inquiétudes de la femme aimée accablent le malheureux amant. L'approche imminente des privations ranime son courage. La misère pour elle, grands dieux! Il cherche à se créer des ressources, frappe à toutes les portes; mais c'est en vain. Manon a entrevu plus tôt que son chevalier le sort qui les attend. Il est toujours l'objet de sa tendresse.

Mais s'il n'y a que lui qu'elle puisse aimer de la façon dont elle l'aime, elle craint que la faim ne cause quelque méprise fatale, et qu'elle ne rende quelque jour le dernier soupir, en croyant en pousser un d'amour. Jeune et jolie, les tentations ne lui font point faute; et, un soir qu'à Prévost est à l'hôtel de Transylvanie, elle cède et s'enfuit. Lorsqu'en rentrant au logis il n'y retrouve plus sa maîtresse, Prévost, éperdu, s'abandonne au désespoir. Tremblant de crainte, les yeux baignés de larmes, il l'appelle et la cherche. La nuit se passe, elle ne revient pas. Le lendemain, dès l'aube, il se met à battre le pavé de Paris pour découvrir la retraite de l'infidèle. Sa trahison ne peut faire doute pour lui: Manon a suivi un riche financier. Après des semaines de recherches et d'efforts, il retrouve enfin la souveraine de son cœur et ne veut plus désormais s'en séparer. Son père, procureur au baillage d'Hesdin, a découvert sa demeure, et il accourt à Paris. Les conseils, les supplications, les menaces, rien ne peut arracher Prévost à sa funeste passion. Le rigide magistrat ne voit le salut de son fils que dans l'intervention du lieutenant général de police. Il lui demande de sévir contre Manon Lescaut. Ce n'est

guère que ce qu'on appelait alors une 'femme du monde'; un ordre de M. Teschereau suffit pour l'envoyer à l'Hôpital, autrement dit la Salpêtrière. On commençait alors d'embarquer quantité de gens sans aveu, des deux sexes, pour la Louisiane. Il fut promis au père de Prévost de faire partir Manon par le premier navire à destination de la Nouvelle-Orléans. Une heure après, cette infortunée allait rejoindre une chaîne de femmes de mauvaise vie condamnées à la déportation. Prévost en fut informé. Il fit aussitôt un paquet de ses hardes et, s'échappant de la maison où son père l'avait pris avec lui, il se dirigea en toute hâte vers l'Hôpital. Quel spectacle ! Manon, sa chère Manon, dans l'infamante charrette, assise sur quelques poignées de paille, enchaînée par le milieu du corps avec une douzaine de filles de joie, que conduisaient les archers... Le triste convoi se met en marche, lentement, jusqu'à la barrière, au milieu des quolibets de la populace. Prévost, portant sur le bras son portemanteau, suit à pied, d'aussi près que les exempts le lui permettent, sans cesser presque un moment de pleurer. A la première étape il achète un cheval. Il a pris le parti de suivre son amante, dût-on l'entraîner au bout du monde. Tout le monde se souvient du récit

navrant que Prévost nous a laissé de ce pénible trajet : les gardes exigeant d'être payés chaque fois qu'ils lui accordaient de parler à Manon, sa bourse épuisée en peu de temps, la nécessité où il se trouva, pour satisfaire leur avarice, et pour être en état de continuer la route à pied, de vendre à Pacy le mauvais cheval qui lui avait servi jusque-là de monture, enfin sa douleur de ne pouvoir plus procurer quelque soulagement à Manon, ni l'approcher. Près d'Yvetot, ses forces trahirent son amour et son courage. Il ne rencontra pas, hélas ! pour le secourir dans sa détresse, le généreux homme de qualité. Abandonné évanoui sur le bord du chemin, ses yeux se fermèrent pendant que les chevaux, fouettés par le charretier, emportaient l'idole qu'il ne devait plus jamais revoir. Lorsque Prévost reprit ses sens, il aperçut une lumière qui brillait au loin dans l'obscurité. C'était la lampe de nuit du monastère Saint-Wandrille. Surmontant sa faiblesse et son désespoir, il se traîna péniblement vers ce lieu hospitalier. On l'y accueillit. 'La malheureuse fin d'un engagement trop tendre, dit Prévost, me conduisit enfin au tombeau. C'est le nom que je donne à l'ordre respectable où j'allais m'ensevelir, et où je demurai quelque temps si bien mort, que mes parents et mes amis

ignorèrent ce que j'étais devenu.'

The date of this love affair corresponds to those given by Pierre Heinrich (1) in regard to the deportations, also to the other records of Prévost's taking his vows.

Petit de Julleville (2) relates an incident in Prévost's life which appears to correspond to that told by Harris: "A vingt-deux ans il cherche à rentrer au couvent, mais, de fait il rentre au régiment, qu'il quitte encore peu après, se retire en Hollande, et revient en France pardonné. Alors survient dans sa vie l'heure décisive qui bouleverse son être moral: il aime d'une irrésistible et subite passion, une jeune fille entrevue à Amiens, et destinée sans vocation, comme lui, à l'état religieux. A la première ivresse d'un bonheur partagé succèdent les inquiétudes, l'impatience des privations, les complaisances inadmissibles et jusqu'au bout l'illusion tenace Prévost accompagne sa Manon sur le chemin de l'exil infamant; enfin, parvenu à Yvetot, à bout de forces, de courage, de ressources, il tombe^{he} et se réfugie dans la religion, consolatrice des grandes douleurs. Il recommence son noviciat, cette fois chez les Bénédictins. Mais quel novice! Il cherche à se dompter par l'étude, il étudie la théologie, il travaille,

à la 'Gallia Christiana.'"

Schroeder (1) says that Prévost was the hero of an adventure while at the Hague just before the novel was written, but it does not correspond in any way with the story in the novel except that in his blind love Prévost became the dupe of his own naiveté.

The baron Marc de Villiers, in his book 'Histoire de la fondation de la Nouvelle-Orléans' quoted by Beaunier (2) announces the discovery of some old unprinted documents, which permits four characters in Manon Lescaut to be identified: the Priest of New Orleans, the Governor of Louisiana, the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon. The Priest is identified with l'abbé Le Maire, missionary priest of 'l'île Dauphine,' the Governor of Louisiana as La Mothe-Cadillac, but according to Beaunier this is impossible as the love affair is believed to have been in 1719 or 1720, and it was no longer La Mothe-Cadillac but his successor who was governor at that time; for La Mothe-Cadillac, named governor in 1712, was revoked in 1716. Villiers identifies Des Grieux as Avril de La Varenne, who was born in 1685 at Angers, his real name being René du Tremblier. (3) He claims to have found the record of baptism of Avril de La Varenne. Manon is thought

to be a person called 'la Froget,' who left Nantes for Biloxi, March 6, 1715, with Avril de La Varenne. Beaunier (1) quotes a letter which Villiers states is from La Mothe-Cadillac, dated January 1716, describing the two people; "Il est venu ici un jeune homme de condition appelé Avril de La Varenne, qui est d'Angers, lequel a amené une femme, qu'on dit avoir été mariée et qui l'est peut-être encore, ayant laissé trois enfants en France. Elle a d'abord pris le nom de Froget, et a present, de Quantin, se disant mariée audit sieur de La Varenne.... Cependant on a su par plusieurs endroits que cela était faux, que c'est une femme de mauvaise vie qui, ayant été chassée d'Angers, s'était retirée à Nantes. A Nantes, elle fut mise en prison, sur la demande de l'évêque d'Angers. Un sieur Raujon, qui se rendait à la Louisiane, la fit évader, la fit admettre sur la Dauphine. C'est une scandaleuse, qui avait séduit le sieur de La Varenne, ce qui causait un grand déplaisir à sa parenté.' Une fois arrivé à la Louisiane, le faux ménage se sépare: Avril de La Varenne part pour les Illinois, où Raujon l'a chargé d'une affaire; et la fille Froget devient employée de Raujon, qui tient le magasin de M. Crozat (2). De mauvais bruits

courent sur les relations de la Froget et de Raujon. M. le curé de l'île Dauphine recueille ces bruits et les colporte. La fille Froget présente une requête en réparation d'honneur, comme si l'honneur de la fille Froget n'était pas irréparable. 'Elle se dit épouse dudit sieur de La Varenne; et cependant elle convient qu'ils sont passés dans ce pays dans la confiance qu'ils ont eue qu'on les marierait, ce qui prouve bien qu'elle ne l'a jamais été avec le sieur de La Varenne...'

La querelle s'envenima. Quand il revint des Illinois, Avril de La Varenne porta plainte, lui aussi: 'Il est gentilhomme et son épouse est demoiselle; il a été capitaine dans la 'sic' régiment de Champagne, où il a servi douze ans; il n'est passé dans ce pays-là que pour éviter des chagrins que sa famille lui aurait pu faire parce qu'il s'est marié clandestinement et qu'il n'était pas majeur...' On n'était majeur qu'à trente ans pour les mariages...' Il le sera dans deux mois: il comptait pour lors se remarier dans les formes en ce pays-là; mais les missionnaires étant prévenus contre lui, et voulant repasser en France, il demande que le gouvernement ne lui en refuse pas la permission...

'Le gouverneur répondit: 'On ne peut empêcher cet homme

de rentrer en France avec sa femme. 'Ainsi, le gouvernement reconnaissait le mariage du sieur Avril de La Varenne et de la demoiselle Froget ou Quantin, qui, à ce qu'il semble, quittèrent bientôt la Louisiane.' Beaunier argues that this story could have no connection with that told by Prévost, for the deportation of the 'filles de joie' in Louisiana began in 1719 during the summer (1), and these people left France four or five years earlier. It is the date of deportation of the 'filles de joie' to Louisiana which causes Beaunier to believe that the date of the 'Histoire de Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut' was about 1719 or 1720. He says "La réalité de Manon Lescaut me paraît beaucoup mieux attestée par les recherches et les trouvailles de M. Pierre Heinrich, lequel ne prétendait pas découvrir la véritable Manon, le véritable Des Grieux, mais a réuni, dans sa brochure 'l'abbé Prévost et la Louisiane, étude sur la valeur historique de Manon Lescaut', divers documents relatifs à la deportation des 'filles de joie' durant les années 1719 et 1720. Ces documents nous montrent des épisodes pareils à maintes scènes de Manon."

Schroeder (1) notes the existence of a Charles des Grieux; éGuyer, chevalier de Saint-Louis who, born in 1709 died in 1723 and was buried at Montreuil-sur-Mer, four or five leagues from Hesdin. Beaunier states that this identification would be impossible, for this man born in 1709 would have been too young in 1719 or 1720 to be the lover of Manon.

Beaunier (2) says that in 1765, appeared a 'Nouveau dictionnaire historique ou histoire abrégée, etc., par une société de gens de lettres' which believes to have identified the Tiberge of l'abbé Prévost with a certain abbé Louis Tiberge, abbé d'Andrès, who directed 'le séminaire des Missions' until 1722 and died in 1730. Since the abbey d'Andrès is in the 'canton de Guines' not far from Boulogne-sur-Mer; and as Hesdin, Prévost's birthplace is very near, Beaunier believes that it is possible that Prévost knew l'abbé Louis Tiberge, but that he is not the Tiberge of Manon Lescaut but only the name of the ecclesiastic applied to another person, for if the adventure of Des Grieux took place in 1719 or 1720 and Des Grieux was about eighteen years old then and his friend Tiberge was three years older, Tiberge must have been born

about 1700 and l'abbé Louis Tiberge, if he ceased to be director of 'le séminaire des Missions' in 1722, would have been superior at 20, which is not possible.

The analogies of Des Grieux and of l'abbé Prévost are very evident, for nearly all the novel may be found in the life of the author; a young man well born, well reared, of excellent resolutions, with a violent passion. Like Lescaut, he led the life of a soldier. Like Des Grieux, he met a 'Manon,' not to say several, but it appears doubtful whether he had any real person in mind when he wrote his book. It is possible that some of the incidents which Villiers and Petit de Julleville have told, may have reached Prévost and inspired him to write 'Manon Lescaut,' but the true 'Manon' seems to have lived and died only in the heart of l'abbé Prévost.

Manon's Deportation Based on Historical Facts.

Prévost had only to look around him in order to find material for some of the scenes in 'Manon Lescaut', for during the years 1719 and 1720 under the 'Système de Law' (1) a number of women 'sans aveu' were deported from Rochefort and Le Havre for 'le Mississippi' to become the wives of the new inhabitants (2). Prévost's sojourn as preacher at Rouen and at Evreux, as well as his exile in Holland, would give him the means of communicating with the world and obtaining the information which he used in his novel, in regard to Manon's deportation.

To people the new French colonies in America became a grave situation. Other women than the Indians were necessary in order to found French homes. Heinrich (3) says that Iberville (4) appealed to the royal governor, and in 1704, twenty young girls sailed from Rochefort going to the colonies in order to be married and establish homes. Colbert himself investigated their moral qualities. In Louisiana, Bienville (5) 'le commandant' of the colony, married them to capable men. An attempt to

prevent the colonists from taking Indian women as slaves, resulted in the deportation in 1712 of orphans reared in an 'hôpital' from their youth. They were from sixteen to twenty years of age, and so uncouth that it was difficult to find places for them, (1). Law furnished an excellent opportunity for getting rid of all 'Manons.' Lost girls, on whom all the vices had imprinted themselves, became the type, that the 'Compagnie d'Occident' (2) chose for deportation. Those sent from Rochefort to 'le Mississipi' in the summer of 1719 would have made l'abbé Prévost's 'Manon' appear like an angel. In this group there was a Manon Porcher (4), nearly thirty, who was arrested for public debauchery and entered for the fourth time at 'l'Hôpital Général.' Joly de Fleury, 'le procureur general,' believed that such as she deserved deportation. Prévost's description of the fate of these girls is not overdrawn, and it is possible that he may have been a witness of the scenes which he described, for Heinrich (5) says that the convoy leaving Paris often took the route to Le Havre whence the women were deported in badly equipped ships of the 'Compagnie des Indes.' The most rigorous orders did not prevent the officers

from associating with the women and it would have been quite possible that Des Grioux passed as Manon's husband. Arriving in Louisiana at 'le Biloxi,' the girls were put under guard, awaiting their fate. With the 'Compagnie des Indes' which took the place of the 'Compagnie d'Occident' (1), the sending of 'Manons' to Louisiana was more frequent. On June 1719 the lieutenant of police Machault arrested two hundred and nine girls to be sent by the 'Compagnie des Indes' to 'le Mississipi' (2). May 9th, 1720, at the demand of some 'concessionnaires,' a decision of the council suppressed the deportation to Louisiana (3). Some months later Des Grioux's father and M.G.M. would have made their request in vain for Manon's deportation. A decision of the 'Conseil d'Etat' in May, 1720, released those whom the 'Compagnie des Indes' was preparing to send to Louisiana (4). In June 1720 (5) the directors decided to send some worthy girls to the American colonies who would be accompanied by a nun. In January 1721 Soeur Gertrude, (une des officières de l'Hôpital Général de la Salpêtrière), accompanied 28 young girls to Louisiana (6). In the spring of 1721 came the fall of the 'Système de Law' (7).

As to the exactness of all the details of the power of the Governor, of the life in the colonies, Chinard (1) believes that Prévost may have had some information at first hand. But he says; "Les quelques pages que Prévost a consacrées à la Nouvelle-Orléans dans Manon, parlent à nos imaginations. Il semble que la vérité des sentiments ait créé la vérité de paysage et que l'on ne puisse voir la Louisiane que par les yeux de la pauvre Manon. Encore aujourd'hui, on montre près du lac Pontchartrain le 'tombeau de Manon;' l'âme plaintive de l'héroïne de Prévost n'a cessé d'errer sur ces bords.....C'est après une navigation de deux mois que Manon et son chevalier abordèrent enfin au rivage désiré. La première impression produite par le pays fut peu favorable. 'Le pays ne nous offrit rien d'agréable à première vue. C'étaient des campagnes stériles et inhabitées ou l'on voyait à peine quelques roseaux et quelques arbres dépouillés par le vent.' Ici, Prévost est manifestement en contradiction avec les voyageurs bien renseignés, mais non pas avec les contes qui avaient cours alors sur la Louisiane, (Journal historique, IV, 446, par Charlevoix). Que l'embouchure du Mississippi ait été inhabitée à cette date, rien de mieux; mais on ne peut

guère passer sur l'épithète de stériles, appliquée aux terres marécageuses du bas fleuve. 'Cependant, continue Prévost, le capitaine ayant fait tirer quelques pièces de notre artillerie, nous ne fûmes pas longtemps sans apercevoir quelques citoyens de la Nouvelle-Orléans, qui s'approchèrent de nous avec de vives marques de joie. Nous n'avions pas découvert la ville, elle est cachée de ce côté-là par une petite colline. Or la ville est à soixante milles de la mer: quant à la petite colline, elle scandalise fort les Louisianais qui, d'ailleurs, en regrettent l'absence dans la réalité.... Nous n'abordons qu'à contre-cœur le récit de la fuite de Manon; pourtant il faut bien noter encors ici quelques invraisemblances. Rendons la parole à Des Grieux: 'J'avais acquis assez de connaissance du pays depuis près de dix mois que j'étais en Amérique pour ne pas ignorer de quelle manière on apprivoisait les sauvages. On pouvait se mettre entre leurs mains sans courir une mort certaine; j'avais même appris quelques mots de leur langue et quelques-unes de leurs coutumes dans les diverses occasions que j'avais eues de les voir. Avec cette triste ressource, j'en avais une autre du côté des Anglais qui ont comme nous

des établissements dans cette partie du Nouveau Monde: mais j'étais effrayé de l'éloignement. Nous avions à traverser, jusqu'à leurs colonies, de stériles campagnes de plusieurs journées de largeur, et quelques montagnes si hautes et si escarpées, que le chemin en parassait difficile aux hommes les plus grossiers et les plus vigoureux. 'Passe encore pour les sauvages; mais nous acceptons plus difficilement l'idée de voyage vers les colonies anglaises qu'il aurait fallu non plus plusieurs jours mais plusieurs mois pour atteindre. Après avoir marché environ deux lieues, Manon à bout de forces tombe pour ne plus se relever. Les fugitifs se trouvaient alors dans une vaste campagne couverte de sable; or à deux lieues de la Nouvelle-Orléans, dans la direction qu'ils ont prise, on ne trouve que le lac Pontchartrain et le terrain est si marécageux qu'il faut connaître les passages pour ne point s'y enliser. Des Grioux, loin d'avoir bien de la peine à creuser la fosse de la pauvre Manon, aurait eu beaucoup de mal lui-même à ne pas disparaître englouti dans le marais."

Manon Lescaut, the novel, by l'abbé Prévost.

The novel begins with the author's relating his meeting with the two principal characters of the story as he was passing through the little town of Passy, which he says is about six leagues from Evreux, and which corresponds in description to the place called Pacy, half way between Evreux and Mantes. There he saw twelve girls, chained together by the waist in two rows and one of these attracted his attention by her manner and beauty. Upon inquiry he found that this one, Manon Lescaut, had been taken from 'l'hôpital' by order of the lieutenant general of police, and was being conducted with other girls of the same class to Le Havre whence they were to be shipped to America. A young man who was in love with her, Des Grieux, had followed her from Paris and had given all his money to the guards for the privilege of talking to her. The writer offered him four louis which would serve him until he reached Le Havre, where Des Grieux would receive some money from a friend. Two years passed and the incident had faded from the author's mind, when one day he met this same young man

in the streets of Calais. Des Grieux had just returned from America and at the request of the author he tells him this sad story:

At seventeen Des Grieux had finished his studies of philosophy at Amiens, where his parents had sent him. He had led a life so studious and well regulated, that his masters pointed him out as a model for the other scholars and the bishop of the diocese suggested that he enter the Church instead of the order of Malta, for which his parents had destined him. He was already wearing the cross of the order, and called the Chevalier des Grieux. The evening before his expected departure for his home, while he and his friend Tiberge were taking a walk, they saw the coach from Arras arrive. Some women alighted and went into the inn. One, very young, remained behind waiting till an old man, who had charge of her, got her baggage from the coach. Her extreme beauty so bewitched Des Grieux that he forgot his usual timidity and advanced towards her. Although younger than himself, she received his civilities without embarrassment and told him that her family was sending her to Amiens to take the veil, doubtless, the author comments, to repress her inclination for pleasure. Des Grieux assured her that if she

would place reliance on his honor, he would sacrifice his life to deliver her from the tyranny of her parents. While they were talking, her old guardian joined them, Des Grieux's hopes would have been blighted had it not been for Manon's resourcefulness. She told her guardian that she had met a cousin and would not go to the convent until the next morning. Des Grieux took them to an inn, the keeper of which was a former coachman of his father's. After much thought, Manon and Des Grieux could discover no other resource than flight and he went to make preparations for stealing away at five o'clock in the morning, before Manon's guardian was awake, and going to Paris. He had fifty crowns and she about twice as much. He deceived his friend Tiberge who had warned him of the danger that he was in, and at the appointed time the lovers left for Paris without creating the least alarm.

They took a furnished apartment in Paris. At the end of three weeks Des Grieux resolved to obtain his father's consent to their marriage. Manon was to him so lovable that he could not doubt her power of winning his father. He realized that their money would soon be exhausted and he hoped for some aid from his family, but Manon refused to consent to his project pretending that she feared his father's refusal. He had not

the slightest suspicion of the cruel blow that she was at the very time preparing to inflict. She told him that she could obtain enough for them to live on from some relation. In a short while he was surprised to see that their style of living was improved, and that Manon had bought expensive dresses, but she assured him that there was nothing to be troubled over, and Des Grieux loved her too well to feel any doubts. One day however he returned home only to find that while he was waiting to get in, a M.de B. had gone down the back stairway. His horror was so great that he left the house without seeing Manon, but soon believing that he had found a satisfactory explanation he returned hoping to hear it from her lips. First she assumed an air of gaiety, then of melancholy, but while he was still waiting for her to account for the incident, a knock was heard and when he opened the door he was seized by three of his father's servants who took him home. There he found out that Manon had deceived him, and that it was M.de B. who had informed his father where he could be found. After six months of grieving over Manon's faithlessness he entered the Seminary at Saint-Sulpice with Tiberge who had succeeded in giving a different

direction to his friend's thoughts. The designation of Abbé Des Grieux was substituted for that of Chevalier, and he gave himself to all the exercises of religion with ardent devotion. He thought himself entirely safe from the dangers of love. The time arrived when he was to undergo a public examination in the class of theology and his name reached the ears of Manon who came to the Sorbonne to attend his examination. On his return to Saint-Sulpice, being told that a lady wished to see him, he went to the parlor and to his surprise found Manon who appeared more bewitching and beautiful than ever. In spite of his effort to affect coldness towards her, his heart was filled with rapture when she begged him to leave the Seminary and return to her, promising to have no more to do with M.de B., and so for her sake he sacrificed reputation and fortune and even more, and left the Seminary without being noticed, to meet her at the end of the street. Thence they went to Chaillet where they found a house and then rented a furnished apartment in Paris in order to satisfy Manon's love for entertainments. Manon had some jewels and about sixty thousand francs which she had taken from M.de B., but this lasted only a short while. Meanwhile, Des Grieux made the

acquaintance of Manon's brother Lescaut, an unprincipled and brutal gambler who tried to pull the young man down to his level. After contriving to make Manon and Des Grieux responsible for all his debts and setting fire to their house at Chaillot to cover up a theft, he proposed various degrading means by which Des Grieux might improve his fortune. At first Des Grieux thought of writing to his father for help, pretending a conversion, but he was certain that after his sudden disappearance from Saint-Sulpice his father would treat his appeal with scorn. He then decided to go to Tiberge in whom he was sure of finding abiding zeal and friendship. He felt nevertheless some shame in appearing before a friend whose mere presence would be a reproach for his disorders; but the opinion that Des Grieux had of the kindness of Tiberge's heart and his own love for Manon, led him on. Tiberge assured him that he was still his friend and gave him one hundred pistoles, provided he be allowed to visit him. Des Grieux was touched by his friends generosity to the point of lamenting a love which made him violate all his duties and he realized the shame and unworthiness of his bondage, but the sight of Manon made him

wonder how he could hold such a feeling against so charming a being. Although he was sure that she preferred him to anyone else in the world, he knew that she would abandon him for some new M.de B. when he had nothing more to offer than fidelity and love, and under Lescaut's influence he became a gambler and a cheat, 'l'hôtel de Transylvanie' being his chief resort. After Lescaut had stolen all the money that Des Grieux had won at cards he influenced his sister to leave with a M.G.M., an old voluptuary, who would pay well for his pleasures. By a ruse of Manon's carried out with the help of Lescaut and Des Grieux, the latter resigning himself to it much against his will and only because he believed it to be the sole way of winning Manon back, she obtained a large sum of money and some jewels from M.G.M. who, infuriated at being duped, had them arrested. Des Grieux was taken to the prison at Saint-Lazare and Manon to an 'hôpital.' After hearing of Des Grieux's good behavior for two months, M.G.M. went there with the intention of liberating him, but on learning that Manon was in an 'hôpital,' Des Grieux in his fury attempted to strangle M.G.M., hence he was sentenced for six months longer. He sent for Tiberge, telling him

everything except his plan of escape. Tiberge was terrified at his state of mind; even though Des Grieux was aware of Manon's infidelity, her love seemed necessary for his happiness. Tiberge understood that there was more weakness than malice in Des Grieux's lapses and so once more, he offered to help him, however he did not know that the letter which Des Grieux asked him to deliver to Lescaut contained a plot for Des Grieux's escape. This project was not as easy as he had thought, for in order to carry out his plans, he was compelled to kill a porter. With the help of a wealthy young man of much influence, M. de T., Des Grieux was able to rescue Manon from 'l'hôpital.' A new difficulty arose when they drove up to Lescaut's house, the coachman not receiving his pay departed threatening to tell of Manon's escape and the three quickly left the place, but were only at five minutes distance when a guardsman from whom Lescaut had won a sum of money that night, met them and recognizing Lescaut, killed him. Manon and Des Grieux fled to Chaillot. Although Des Grieux knew it would be necessary to endure his friends reproaches, he went once more to Tiberge for help. He was relieved to learn that the circumstances of his flight from Saint Lazare had been withheld

from the lieutenant général and he would have nothing to fear. Not knowing of Manon's escape, Tiberge advised him to leave Paris and go to his father's. Although Des Grieux did not follow Tiberge's advice, he wrote a very submissive letter to his father hoping to obtain some money under the pretext 'de faire' ses 'exercices à l'Académie.' He was ready to apply himself to some creditable pursuit, so far as such an occupation might be compatible with his love. In his new friendship with M. de T., and the tender affection of Manon, Des Grieux imagined himself free from any new misfortune, however there was one pending which caused him more grief than all the others. Manon found a new suitor in M.G., son of the man who had sent Des Grieux to St. Lazare and Manon to 'l'hôpital.' Her plan was to seek revenge on the father, through the son's purse, but by an unforeseen turn of fortune Des Grieux became the victim. Much against the latter's wishes, Manon, in answer to a letter promising her a fortune, went to the 'hôtel' of G.M. in Paris to carry out a plan which had been made to obtain G.M.'s money and go with Des Grieux to a new home in Paris. Once there, however, Manon was given so many luxuries

that she failed to keep her promise and instead sent as a consolation to Des Grieux, a young girl whom he scorned. The success of attempting to take Manon by main force from the hands of G.M. was improbable, so he resolved to find a way in which he might see her. He appealed to M. de T., who got G.M. away from his 'hotel' on pretext of wanting to borrow some money which he knew that G.M. would have to obtain from his father. This gave Des Grieux an opportunity to see Manon. She embraced him with her usual tenderness, but he repulsed her with indignation for it was the third time that she had left him to avoid poverty. Even though she found luxury and wealth in the house of another, she still loved Des Grieux and her caresses soon turned his scorn to pity, for his love for her rendered him blind to all her faults and he was happy at the prospect of rescuing her that night from his rival. Fearing G.M.'s return, Des Grieux went out and hired a guardsman, with whom Lescaut had made him acquainted, to undertake the arrest of G.M. and keep him confined until Manon and he could make their escape, taking G.M.'s money with them. A servant of G.M.'s who had followed him, informed the old M.G.M. of the affair. The latter discovering Manon and Des Grieux's plot to make his son

their dupe, and not having forgotten his own affair with Manon, was enraged and ordered them arrested and taken to prison at the Châtelet. The next day Des Grieux's father arriving in Paris and learning that his son was in prison, went to the old M.G.M. who consented to Des Grieux's release, but had Manon condemned to perpetual imprisonment, or to be transported for life to America. It happened that at that time a number of 'gens sans aveu' were being sent to 'le Mississipi' and it was arranged to have Manon deported with them. When leaving the prison, Des Grieux was informed of Manon's sentence and at this supreme hour he did not forsake her. He immediately went to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, without feeling the least embarrassment lest he should be recognized, in order to obtain help from Tiberge who did not know of Des Grieux's last adventure. From Tiberge he got five hundredfrances and then he went to M.de T. who gave him fifty livres. After having tried in vain to interest his father and the lieutenant of police in Manon's favor, he decided to save her by violence and at the risk of his life. In this he failed because of the base betrayal of his accomplices. He bought the right from the guards to speak to Manon while following the prisoners to Le Havre, but by the

time they had reached Nantes his purse was empty and upon arriving at Passy he wrote to Tiberge for more money. It was at Passy that the author met Des Grieux and Manon. When they reached Le Havre, Des Grieux not having received the money from Tiberge, sold his horse for forty pistoles and went on board the ship as a voluntary emigrant to the colony. On their arrival in New Orleans the Governor having a right to assign the girls to young men who wished to marry and believing Manon and Des Grieux to have been married, placed them in a house together. Des Grieux felt a calm happiness near Manon and little by little this happiness brought a sense of duty. Manon's fidelity seemed assured; she had no more before her the spectacle of riches. Des Grieux desired that his union with Manon might be blessed by the Church. He hoped that the words of the priest might efface from his memory the last traces of the past. A new difficulty arose when he asked the Governor's consent to his marriage with Manon, for the Governor had a nephew named Synnelet who had fallen in love with Manon on the day of her arrival. Believing her Des Grieux's wife, he had suppressed any outward demonstration of his love, but no sooner had the Governor learned that Manon was not married than he

proposed to give Manon to his nephew. Des Grieux defended his right by the sword; believing that he had killed his adversary, he fled with Manon hoping to find an English colony, but Manon's strength was soon exhausted and he spent the night watching over her until she died. His grief was so intense that after burying her he laid himself face down upon the grave, and closed his eyes with the determination never again to open them. In the meantime Synnelet had been found to be only slightly wounded. A search for Des Grieux revealed him prostrate upon Manon's grave. He was taken back to the colony and thrown into prison, being accused of having murdered Manon from rage and jealousy, but when he told his story he was released. Six weeks later Tiberge arrived in New Orleans in search of Des Grieux, having known of his destination from the letter that Des Grieux had written asking for money while at Passy. With his faithful friend, Des Grieux took the first vessel that sailed for France and upon his arrival at Le Havre, Des Grieux wrote to his family. He learned that his father was dead, then he left for Calais and was on his way to join his brother at the house of a relative when the author of the story met him for the second time.

Manon Lescaut, Libretto, by Meilhac and Gillo,

Opera by Massenet.

Act. 1. The libretto begins with Des Grieux's own story. As in the novel, the setting represents the courtyard of an inn at Amiens, but here it is a gay crowd of bourgeois and bourgeoisies who have gathered to watch the arrival of the coach from Arras. In the inn are three flashily dressed girls feasting with two farmers general, Guillot de Morfontaine and De Brétigny, two old roués, whose names have been made up from the initials used in the novel, G.M. and H.de B. and who in the novel do not appear until Manon and Des Grieux have gone to Paris. Here too Manon makes her entrance in a stage coach but instead of being in charge of the old guardian who makes the advances of the gallants more difficult, she is met by Lescaut, a life guardsman, who is no longer Manon's brother but her cousin and who in the novel does not appear until Des Grieux has left the Seminary at Saint-Sulpice and gone to Paris with Manon for the second time. Manon left alone in the courtyard by Lescaut who goes in search of her baggage is approached not by Des Grieux but by Guillot de Morfontaine who, coming out of the inn, is captivated by her beauty and makes

love to her, proposing to send a carriage to carry her off. After Lescaut has frightened Guillot de Morfontaine away, he goes off to drink and gamble with two guardsmen, cautioning Manon against chance acquaintances and bidding her not to stir from the spot until he comes back. The librettists reveal Manon's character by showing the longing with which she gazes at the three showy women and the regret she feels at being sent to a convent. While she is in this mood, Des Grieux who as in the novel is on his way to his home, sees her and the transition from strangers to lovers is as quick as in the novel, but instead of the long detail of preparation for the elopement, the action moves quickly; it is at Manon's suggestion that they take the carriage which Guillothas sent for her, and go off together. While Guillot de Morfontaine, laughed at for the trick that has been played on him, swears revenge, Lescaut coming in tipsy, bewails his double loss of money and cousin.

This being a dramatic production, all of the principal characters of the entire opera have been introduced, while in the novel we have met only Manon and Des Grieux.

The setting for the first act, the gay crowd, Guillot and De Brétigny ordering their wines, Lescaut gambling and getting tipsy, the three gay women, all give a much different atmosphere from that of the beginning of the novel.

Act. II. In the second act the plot, though carried out differently, is the same as in the novel. After Des Grieux has as in the original, taken Manon to his simply furnished apartment in Paris, he writes a letter to his father telling him of Manon's bewitching beauty and asking his consent to their marriage, to which project in the novel Manon refuses to give her consent. Unlike Prévost the librettists have De Brétigny, who has secretly been courting Manon, come boldly to the apartment with Lescaut. The latter assuming righteous indignation demands satisfaction from Des Grieux for the abduction of his cousin, but his blustering quails before Des Grieux's firmness and he declares himself satisfied after learning that the young man intends to marry Manon. While Lescaut is talking to Des Grieux, De Brétigny informs Manon that by order of Des Grieux's father, her lover will be taken from her by force that night. She is distressed at the news

and her first impulse is to tell Des Grieux. But here also, tempted by the lure of wealth, she hesitates until it is too late and Des Grieux is carried off.

Act III.

Tableau 1. Whereas the novel merely tells us of the sad and uneventful life that Des Grieux passed at his father's house after being taken away from Manon, the first tableau of the third act shows a gay scene in the promenade of the Cours la Reine, on a holiday. Numerous traders are crying their wares from their booths; a dancing pavilion is seen at the side; among the throng of merry makers are the three gay women Manon envied when at Amiens, and also Lescaut who buys anything that is offered him, saying there is no need of economy when money is so easy to win. The two libertines join the crowd, jealous of one another, Guillot hearing that De Brétigny has refused to send the opera to Manon, seizes this opportunity and brings the ballet to the Cours la Reine. Manon attended by her admirer De Brétigny, enters in a lively mood and extols youth in song, for it is a gala day for her. While she is making some purchases, the father of her former lover, the Count Des Grieux, enters and to the surprise of De Brétigny who asks what brought him to Paris, the count tells him that his son who is

at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, is on the point of taking orders and will give an address that very evening. After seeing the fascinating Manon, the Count understands why De Brétigny has taken so much interest in his son's affairs. Manon overhearing the conversation, approaches the Count with embarrassment, pretending to be a friend of the girl with whom his son is in love, and begs him to tell her whether Des Grieux still thinks of Manon. The count knowing that it is Manon herself talking to him, hesitates, then tells her that his son has learned the lesson that all who are wise must learn, viz. 'to forget.' Her gaiety vanishes and forgetting the interest she had in the opera, the capricious girl goes at once to the Seminary.

Tableau II.

This scene is a strong contrast to the animated setting of the first tableau. At this point the libretto proceeds with but little variation from the novel, the principal changes being: the father's visit to his son at the Seminary, pleading with him not to retire from the world but to marry some honorable girl; Manon's entrance into the reception room of the Seminary, where she comes veiled and where, while waiting for Des Grieux

she hears the chanting in the chapel, and as they pray she too utters a prayer that she may be forgiven and regain the heart of him whom she loves. When Des Grieux enters and comes towards her, Manon slowly removes her veil and he cries out as he recognizes her. As in the novel he is finally overcome by her pleadings and departs with her.

Henry T. Finck in his book 'Massenet and his Operas' says (1): "The episode in the Seminary, with its commingling of ecclesiastic and amorous strains, is Massenet every inch. While Auber omitted it, one cannot but guess that it was this scene that suggested the opera to Massenet, who is at his very best in it. The polyphonic choruses in the chapel once more bear witness to his technical skill and his 'ars celare artem.' It takes a Frenchman to be scholarly and popular at the same time."

Act IV.

The drama demanding brevity, the material from which the librettists have formed the fourth act has been taken from various episodes of the novel and condensed. The plot which the librettists develop making Guillot the dupe of Des Grieux, is entirely different; instead of

having Manon leave her lover in order to avoid poverty, and go off with the old M. de G.M., then steal from him a large sum of money and return to Des Grieux, both being imprisoned for it, the dramatists have shown the degradation into which Des Grieux has fallen under the influence of his perfidious mistress and of the evil Lescaut, by a scene in the 'Hôtel de Transylvanie' in Paris, the place which Prévost says was Des Grieux's favorite gambling resort. Des Grieux penniless, comes with Manon at her repeated pleading, to win a fortune at the gaming table. The room is crowded with people all possessed by the fever of gambling and among them Lescaut, Guillot, and the same three women who have appeared before. Des Grieux recoils at the idea of coming to such a place, but yields to Manon's insistence and Lescaut's reminder that Manon does not love poverty; Guillot who has been trying to win Manon ever since that first scene at Amiens, offers to play with him. Des Grieux's luck arouses the anger of his opponent who accuses him of cheating, rushes out muttering threats and before Manon can induce Des Grieux to leave the place, Guillot returns with the police and denounces Des Grieux as a swindler and Manon as his accomplice. In the turmoil

Des Grieux is astonished to find himself face to face with his father, who has come to tear him from his life of shame and who refuses to listen to the lovers' pleadings. Des Grieux is arrested and Manon is given over to a guard who Guillot says will take her where her kind go.

Act V.

The librettists have deviated from the novel by placing the final scenes in France instead of America as well as shortening them, but as in the novel Des Grieux plans to rescue Manon on her way to Le Havre from where she is to be deported to America. Waiting on a highroad for the prison van to pass on its way to Le Havre, as in the novel, the men whom Des Grieux had hired to assist him have fled, and it is Lescaut (in the novel killed some time before) who bribes the sergeant and thereby obtains an interview for the lovers.

The death scene with the exception of the setting holds to the original; after ecstatic reminiscences and passionate outpourings, Manon receives Des Grieux's forgiveness and dies in his arms.

The Meilhac and Gille version varies a great deal from the novel; one entirely new scene is introduced, that of the Cours La Reine on a public holiday;

the material for the fourth act being taken from various scenes in the novel; the last act occurring in France instead of America. The librettists have not given the same idea of Manon's deportation as Prévost, who makes it plain that Manon, taken from an 'hôpital,' is being deported with other girls of her class to 'le Mississipi' in order to populate the new French colonies. The composer shows a more pathetic Manon, more agitated from the beginning than does Prévost.

Schroeder (1) says: "Cette réserve faite, je ne saurais trop répéter à quel point la musique tour à tour spirituelle et passionnée fait encore ressortir les mérites de l'oeuvre dont elle rend si bien toutes les nuances." Des Grieux also is represented in a much more favorable light, for it is only Manon's repeated pleadings that cause him to gamble. The dramatists do not bring in any thought of marriage, which in the novel occupies a very important place.

Manon Lescaut provided Massenet with excellent opportunities for the portrayal of love, for which he is noted and for adding another clearly marked female type to his list. It is plain that Massenet sympathizes with Manon, in her pleasures and sorrows

alike, for his music treats Manon's shallow feelings as if they were as sincere as the love of Des Grieux for her.

The whole opera grows out of fifteen motives. Manon whose type is a mixture of melancholy and gaiety, has two, to indicate this alternation. Each scene has the exact color of the situation. As for the note of life and passion, it is Manon and Des Grieux who give it.

The first production of the opera was at the Opera Comique in Paris, January 19, 1884. The first American performance was by the Mapleson Company at the New York Academy of Music on December 23, 1885. The first New Orleans production January 4, 1894. In 1909, at the Metropolitan, Caruso chose Des Grieux for one of his French roles, following Faust and Carmen, and he made his debut in it at the Metropolitan with Geraldine Farrar as Manon and Scotti as Lescaut.

Manon Lescaut, Libretto, by Puccini and a committee
of friends.

Opera by Puccini.

As in the novel and the Massenet opera, the inn at Amiens has been used for the setting of the first act. In addition to the chorus of bourgeois, bourgeoisen, soldiers, and citizens as in the Massenet, there is a crowd of working girls and students who greet Des Grieux, a student, as he enters. Just as he refuses to join the jovial crowd, saying that of love, tragedy or comedy he knows nothing, the coach from Arras arrives as in the novel and Manon makes her appearance. This time she is accompanied by Lescaut, as everywhere a dissolute soldier, and as in the novel her brother, who is taking her to the convent, a fate she mourns for she is full of illusions and dreams of a gay life. Geronte de Ravoire, treasurer general, an old man who has travelled in the same coach, assists Manon to alight. It is interesting to note that the librettists have used, as Molière does, the name Geronte to designate an old man. Another interesting change is the fact that the younger lover is given the full name of Renato Des Grieux, which does not appear in the novel, or in the other librettos. At the beginning

of this opera Manon is eighteen instead of sixteen as in the novel, and her meeting with Des Grieux occurs in much the same manner, for as soon as she is left alone Des Grieux who has kept his eyes fixed on Manon from the time of her arrival, approaches her and declares his love. Manon soon called away by her brother, promises Des Grieux to return later. When Geronte sees that Lescaut has been enticed away by the love of gambling and is neglecting his sister, he seeks the landlord and plots to abduct Manon, but Edmondo, a student overhearing the scheme, informs Des Grieux, and when Manon returns, suggest that they make their escape in the very carriage which Geronte has ordered. This they do, leaving the old man furious, and when he calls upon Lescaut to follow Manon, the brother, as in the novel, shows himself to be without honor or principle, for he assures Geronte that the purse of a young student cannot last long and that Manon not being able to bear privation will soon forsake her lover in order to accept a palace.

It is interesting to note the change that the librettists have made in introducing Edmondo, one of the jovial students seeking amorous adventures, who assists Des Grieux in making his flight with Manon, it is a complete contrast with the novel, in which Des Grieux's

high-principled and faithful friend, Tiberge, tries to prevent him from eloping with Manon.

Act II.

The events of the second act seem to have been inspired by Manon's affair in the novel with the young M. de G.M., her last adventure before being deported. However, the librettists have taken a part of the plot, the attempt to steal the jewels, from the scene with the old M. de G.M., which makes this act vary enough from the original to necessitate a brief résumé of it.

Manon has left Des Grieux for the wealthier Garonte. Richly dressed and surrounded by the utmost luxury, she is seated at her toilet table attended by a hairdresser as Lescaut enters and congratulates her on her change of fortune and takes the credit to himself. Manon interrupts him by inquiring for her young lover whose caresses she misses, and when she learns that Lescaut has made a gambler and a swindler of him in order that Des Grieux might return to her, she mournfully regrets that she has had so faithlessly left him. Still pensive she turns to the mirror, sees the reflection of her own beauty, her hands unconsciously arrange the folds of her gown, then her thoughts change, a smile flits across her face and with an air of

triumph she seeks compliments from Lescaut. They are interrupted by a company of madrigal singers who have been sent by Geronte to amuse Manon. Bored by their presence, she gives Lescaut a purse to pay them but he pockets the money. When the singers have departed, the dancing master appears to teach Manon a minuet while Geronte and several friends watch her admiringly. After they leave for the boulevard, Manon promising to join them, Des Grieux appears, as in the novel reproaching her bitterly for her fickleness, but when she pleads for his forgiveness he is bewitched and folds her in his arms. Geronte suddenly comes in, amazed and infuriated, he sarcastically upbraids them and departs telling them that he will return later. Des Grieux begs Manon to flee with him but she sighs at the thought of leaving all the jewels and while Des Grieux is condemning her for the disgrace she has brought upon him, Lescaut rushes in and warns them that Geronte has denounced Manon and they must flee at once. Des Grieux pleads with Manon to escape, but she insists on collecting her jewels first. The delay is fatal, for Geronte soon appears. In Manon's terror she lets her cloak slip and the jewels fall to the floor. She is arrested and taken to prison.

Act III.

In a short intermezzo at the end of the second act, the dramatists have shown Des Grieux's struggle to save Manon while on her journey to Le Havre. The third act has no connection whatsoever with the plot of the novel. The first part is a scene in which Des Grieux and Lescaut fail in their last attempt to rescue Manon who is now imprisoned in the barracks at Le Havre, waiting to be deported. The librettists have created a very impressive scene in their representation of the women as they answer the roll call and go on board the ship. The citizens watch them as they pass by and Lescaut arouses their sympathy for Manon, and after Des Grieux has made an attempt to wrench her from the grasp of the Sergeant, who has separated them as they were bidding each other a passionate farewell, the Captain touched by his entreaties and the sympathy of the crowd, consents to let Des Grieux go on board the ship with Manon. Lescaut who has been watching them from a distance shakes his head and goes off.

Act V.

This act is merely a long duet in which the sad tragedy ends as it does in the novel. Wandering as night falls, in a vast plain on the borders of the territory

of New Orleans, Manon exhausted, sends Des Grieux on an unsuccessful search for water. Left alone she is terrified and feels forsaken, she realizes that she is dying and all of her past haunts her. When Des Grieux returns he is overcome with grief, for he knows that she will soon be gone. With a supreme effort she bids him farewell and tells him that 'time would obliterate her faults but her love would never die.' Des Grieux bursts into convulsive sobs and falls senseless upon Manon's body.

As in the Massenet opera, there is no thought of marriage, nor do the librettists attempt a burial scene.

Puccini's version of Manon Lescaut consists of four detached scenes selected from the novel, which have been followed more closely than in the librettos by Meilhac and Gille, and Scribe. Puccini as well as Auber has omitted the scene at Saint-Sulpice, which Massenet has made the most dramatic part of his entire opera. However Puccini, as opposed to the Massenet Opera, has used Louisiana, as in the novel, for the setting of the final act. Puccini, among the composers of the new school of opera in Italy in the nineteenth century, undertook to compose dramas of real life, characters taken

from the middle and lower grades of society in which the native instincts and passions are displayed in all their nakedness. This novel seems a happy choice for the composer as a means of developing his new idea of operatic realism. Puccini has followed the modern tendency by making the music exist for the sake of adding force to action and poetic development, particularly in the final act in which his music portrays the failing strength of Manon and the despair of Des Grieux when he is powerless to aid her; the last farewell of the lovers, and the bitter grief of the unhappy young man when Manon dies.

The Puccini opera is in four acts, the libretto being mainly the work of the composer and a committee of friends, and is written in Italian. It was first presented at Turin February 1st, 1893. The first performance in the United States at the Grand Opera House, Philadelphia, in English, August 29, 1894. The first important New York production, January 18, 1907, was with Caruso, under the direction of the composer, who then visited America for the first time.

Manon Lescaut, Libretto, by Scribe,

Opera by Auber.

This libretto has inspired itself from the novel in a general way and departs so much from the original that it is necessary to give a résumé of it. Beyond Manon, Des Grieux, and Lescaut, who remain fairly true, the rest are imagined and all the settings are changed, with the exception of the last, which as in the novel is the desert in Louisiana.

Act I.

One day when the coach of the Marquis d'Hérigny, a colonel, had knocked down a young girl standing in front of a shop admiring a bonnet, the Marquis left his carriage, carried her half fainting into the shop and ordered her soiled clothes exchanged for an elegant costume. Infatuated by her beauty, he put her into his carriage to take her home, but when he stopped to buy some jewels which she admired, he found much to his surprise on his return that she had flown, and the coachman having fallen asleep was unable to tell where she had gone. The Marquis had Lescaut, a soldier in his employ, search for her, and several days later when he discovered the address, they go to the apartment and receiving no answer, enter and while waiting the girl's

return, a friend of hers named Marguerite arrives and recognizes the Marquis as the son of the Madame la Marquise who employs her as a seamstress. In answer to the Marquis's questions, believing that like his mother he has come on a charitable errand, Marguerite tells him that the girl who is named Manon has arrived recently from the provinces, is an orphan without fortune destined to enter a convent, and has fallen in love with a young Chevalier, named Des Grieux, who came to Paris to escape the tyranny of his parents. They intend to get married, but his father refuses to send him any money and their sole resource is a watch set in diamonds left to Des Grieux by his mother, but which Manon does not wish him to sell. The most surprising revelation is that she is a cousin of Lescaut's. After the two men have left, Manon comes in alone, in a happy, carefree manner. She has met on the stairs the Marquis and Lescaut, and Marguerite learns that it is Lescaut's father at Amiens who was sending Manon to a convent; Manon also tells Marguerite that while she was in the Marquis's carriage, Des Grieux caught sight of her. To reassure him, she jumped down from

the carriage, forgetting the Marquis, and returned with the Chevalier to their attic. Manon, good at heart, had never thought of her future with Des Grieux and cannot understand why Marguerite wishes her to marry him and take the responsibilities of a home, for as she says, she knows only how to laugh, talk, sing, and play the guitar. Luxury and wealth is her element. In order to appeal to Manon's moral sense, Marguerite tells her of her own love for a young man named Gervais, who is working hard to save enough money that they may marry, but Manon thinks this is a waste of time. However, after she reads a letter from Gervais to Marguerite she is touched by its sincerity and promises to begin work at once. Manon's love for the beautiful does not permit a serious thought to remain long; thinking that the Marquise's beautiful garment, on which she has taken a few stitches, would be becoming to her, she wraps it around herself just as Des Grieux enters. Captivated by her beauty in such an elegant gown, he offers to buy one for her, for he says that he is now rich. While they are planning an elaborate party, Lescaut comes to pick a quarrel

with Des Grieux, but on discovering their new situation, at the same time suspecting that Des Grieux has sold his watch, he offers to take charge of the dinner. At the cabaret Des Grieux is very happy in being able to satisfy Manon's wishes, but after the dinner this happiness soon turns into chagrin when he asks Manon for the purse and learns that she has given it to Lescaut who has promised to return it in half an hour. But when Lescaut arrives, he has lost everything gambling, and a commissioner who is present, believing that they are all sharpers, having met with Manon before, orders Des Grieux to pay, or go to prison. Lescaut tries to persuade Des Grieux to make his escape, but he refuses and goes out at Lescaut's suggestion to get money from a Sergeant. In a few moments Manon seeing a young girl enter with a guitar, with a cry of delight asks to borrow it. As she takes the guitar, she sees the Marquis with some friends, entering the room, and she begins to play and sing a couplet which she composes at the same time, for his benefit, then asks the crowd for money to give to the girl. The Marquis bewitched by the seductive Manon, throws her a purse

full of gold, which she uses to pay the innkeeper after giving a share to the girl. Through Lescaut's influence Des Grieux joins the Colonel's regiment, which gives the Marquis an opportunity to separate Manon and his rival.

Act II.

The theatre represents an elegant salon in the Marquis's 'hotel' where preparations are being made for a large ball to be given that evening. Marguerite comes to deliver his mother's ball dress, and obtains the Marquis's promise to release Des Grieux and never to see Manon again. He does not keep his word, however, for when Manon finding that she could not see Des Grieux at the prison without the Marquis's consent, comes to obtain that permission, he offers her jewels and riches if she will become the mistress of his palace. Manon refuses although she looks at the luxury around her with envy. Marguerite comes in, just in time to prevent Manon from accepting the Marquis's wealth. When the Marquis leaves them for a few minutes, Marguerite begs Manon to go at once, offering to help her by turning over her own work to Manon, for Marguerite is leaving to join Gervais who has gone to Louisiana,

where the Marquise has sent him to take charge of one of her plantations, but Manon refuses to go. Lescaut, half drunk, comes to inform the Marquis that Des Grieux, prohibited from seeing Manon that morning, had struck an officer and then made his escape. The Marquis seeks Manon and offers to let Des Grieux remain unpunished if she will accept this wealth and see Des Grieux no more. While he is giving orders to let no one see Manon, Lescaut, unobserved, takes a jewel box from the table and puts it into his hat. Left alone, Manon accidentally rings a bell which brings two servants; she realizes that she could have such luxury all the time. A thunder-storm which has been gathering breaks with force, and Manon, distracted, seats herself on the sofa, but is soon startled by the presence of Des Grieux, who after making his escape had gone to their home and was informed by Marguerite that Manon was with the Marquis. Finding all the halls guarded he had gained his entrance through the window into the room in which he found Manon. He reproaches her for being there, but she assures him that it is only to obtain his release. Des Grieux falling exhausted into a chair, Manon thoughtlessly rings for the servants and after

ordering something to eat for her lover, bolts the doors. In a short while a secret door in the wainscoting opens and the Marquis appears. Furious at having received no answer to his knocking, and finding Manon in Des Grieux's arms, he calls the servants to throw him out. Des Grieux and the Marquis cross swords and the commissioner and soldiers arrive just as Des Grieux seriously wounds the Marquis. As they take Manon and Des Grieux off, the Marquis magnanimously tears Des Grieux's enlistment paper into pieces, - unobserved.

Act III.

Three months later in Louisiana on the banks of the Mississippi near New Orleans, while Gervais and Marguerite are preparing for their wedding, their attention is turned to a group of girls advancing, bound two by two, at the waist. One who hangs her head, arouses pity in Marguerite, at whose request Renaud, inspector of the prisoners, releases her, and much to Marguerite's astonishment, she discovers while giving aid to the poor girl, that it is Manon, who having been accused of the theft which Lescaut had committed, had been arrested and deported with these women who were sent to

populate the colony, Renaud having the right to choose, intends to take her for his wife. On returning from Marguerite's wedding, Des Grieux, who after being released from prison had found that Manon was being sent to Louisiana, taken passage on the same boat and then followed Manon to this place, arrives and buys from Renaud the opportunity of talking to Manon. His money soon gone he attempts to take Manon from Renaud by force and pulls a revolver from his pocket just as Marguerite enters and remains hidden behind an open cellar door. As Renaud recoils to the first step of the door, she closes it on him and locks him in, and then arranges the escape of Manon and Des Grieux. Manon, dressed in Marguerite's wedding robe, is led safely away by Gervais, Des Grieux following. Shortly after they have gone, a sound of a canon is heard and Marguerite fears it is to make known their flight, but when she opens the cellar door in answer to Renaud's pounding, she learns that the canon was announcing the arrival of the new Governor, the Marquis d'Hérigny. Attempting to reach a fort where Des Grieux has some friends, Manon and he wander

for a day in the desert, until they lose their way. Des Grieux, exhausted from his efforts to rescue Manon from Renaud and from a tiger which they encounter in the desert, faints, and Manon taking the gourd which Gervais had provided, gives him the last drop of water. Continuing their way, Manon is soon exhausted, and as she lies dying in Des Grieux's arms, she begs him to forgive her for all the harm that she has done him, tells him that she is happy and would have nothing to desire, if she could die as his wife. They pray that this may come true, and the harps in the orchestra bring the response which descends from heaven. As Manon dies, Des Grieux in despair throws himself on her body, and thus Gervais and Marguerite find them when they come to announce that the Governor has freed him and Manon.

Other Dramatizations.

In addition to the librettos which have been analysed, Henry T. Finck in his book, 'Massenet and his Operas', notes the existence of two other operas entitled 'Manon Lescaut,' one composed in 1830 by the gifted French composer Halévy, and the other in 1836 by the Irish Balfe. It has been impossible to obtain the librettos of these operas (1).

In regard to other dramatizations of Manon, it is interesting to turn to the following article by Norman Hapgood in the Bookman for May, 1901: "Manon Lescaut was put on at Wallack's Theatre by Herbert Kelcey and Effie Shannon, and was so hopelessly bad that it ended its engagement and its career in less than two weeks. What is interesting in this event lies somewhat under the surface. Manon has been in the air for some time, and at least four versions of it have been in the possession of prominent managers. One of these was made by Edith Wharton, and is the best

drama, both from the literary and theatrical point of view, among the unacted American plays which I have read. The first American manager to whom it was shown accepted it immediately and kept it several months, when his star demanded that Manon be made moral, and he himself asked for a strong penultimate act. Mrs. Wharton, not having her reputation for sale, simply withdrew the play. As soon as this course was taken another version of Manon was rushed to immediate production under the nominal management of a different man, but with the same group of managers really interested. Theodore Burt Sayre, an employe of this group of artists, turned out a drama exactly according to their ideas. Manon was made almost too holy for this world; and the third act, which was the next to the last, the one always chosen for the circus, contained a duel, a murder by Manon, several stage tricks, and two attempts at rape. The utter failure of this wretched parody of one of the world's greatest masterpieces following as it did the refusal to use a play which even the managers could see was dramatic as well as worthy of the novel in its literary quality, might possibly be supposed to teach them something; but it would be a rash hope that should rest on any change in their ideas."

Conclusion.

Upon considering the resemblances and differences between the novel, "Manon Lescaut" and its various dramatizations, it is necessary first of all to bear in mind that to the novel there is practically no time limit and in its large scope, the novelist is able to build his own stage and analyse minutely the interplay of event and character, while to the length of a play, there are fixed limits, and the setting of a dramatic action is restricted. The novel has the advantage of permitting a detailed study of character and allows a gradual introduction of the personages, whereas the drama has to give a complete exposition, then move swiftly to the climax and the denouement.

It is interesting to note these differences between novel and drama in the study of l'abbé Prévost's work and its dramatizations.

In shortening the story, the librettists have chosen those episodes in the novel which seem best fitted to give the composer an opportunity to make use of his particular dramatic talent.

While the first two acts of the Meilhac and Gille libretto hold fairly true to the novel in setting and characters, the first tableau of the third act is entirely original and serves to portray Manon's levity as well as making a strong contrast with the following tableau which takes place in the Seminary. In the next act, the scene in the 'Hôtel de Transylvanie', which is only suggested in the novel, gives a picture of the degradation into which Des Grieux has fallen. Placing the setting of the last act in France, has served as a means of shortening the story but still giving the same description of Manon's death as in the novel.

The Puccini libretto varies a great deal from Meilhac and Gilles's in its choice of scenes. The first act has the same setting as in Meilhac and Gilles's, but has attempted to create a student atmosphere. The student Edmondo, may have been inspired by the Tiberge in the novel, but their characters are entirely different, for here it is Edmondo who assists Des Grieux to elope with Manon. The second act portrays Manon's character quite as well as does the second act of the Meilhac and Gille libretto and the choice of setting

is more closely connected with that of the novel. Puccini and his friends have omitted the scene in the Seminary which is the capital one with Meilhac and Gille. The intermezzo between acts two and three gives only a short description of the journey to Le Havre which Meilhac and Gille use for the final act. Act three, original with the librettists, is interesting in its presentation of the deportation of 'filles de joie.' The last act, as in the novel, pictures the death scene in America.

In the Scribe libretto, the last act is the only one which resembles the novel. The librettist has ignored the original, building a whole play which can be scarcely recognized except for the three characters, Manon, Des Grieux, and Lescaut.

In the three librettos, the first act of each introduces all of the characters. The personnel of the Massenet opera is the only one, however, which includes all of the prominent personages in the novel; namely, Manon, Des Grieux, the Count Des Grieux, Lescaut, who is here the cousin, and the two roués, Guillot de Morfontaine, and De Brétigny, while the other two operas

introduce only one roué in each, and neither of these operas have created a role for Des Grieux's father, who is only mentioned in both. As in the Massenet, Lescaut also is Manon's cousin in the Auber opera, Puccini being the only one who holds to the original in Lescaut's relation to her.

As in the novel, all the librettos portray Manon, a shallow, fickle pleasure loving, vain girl, absolutely without conscience or moral principles. In the Massenet opera Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette, serve to emphasize her levity and in the scene in the promenade of the Cours la Reine on a holiday, we see her in the height of her glory as she goes from booth to booth making purchases. Her vanity is clearly shown in the Puccini opera in act two as she admires herself before the mirror in the handsome room in Geronte's house, and rejoices in Lescaut's flattery; likewise in the Auber opera, when dressed in the Marquise's gown, she seeks Des Grieux's compliments, also her frivolity is depicted, for she says herself that she knows only how to laugh, sing, play the guitar and dance. Yet with all these bad traits she is able to make a slave of her lover, who constantly closes his eyes to any

infidelity of hers.

In the noveland all of the librettos, Des Grieux is depicted as a young man blind in his love, who refuses to be happy; who goes voluntarily into misfortune. He has however a natural aversion for vice as did Prévost himself and in the novel as well as in the Meilhac and Gille libretto, like Prévost after he has been deceived by his mistress, he renounces worldly pleasures and consecrates himself to religion. There is seen in the conduct of Des Grieux a terrible example of the strength of the passions, for when he is near Manon his love for her prevents him from taking advantage of the remedies which are continually offered to him by his ever faithful Tiberge found in the novel. The Chevalier is a contradictory character as will be seen in all of the librettos as well as in the novel, for he rebukes Manon and then blinded by his love for her, he continues to have confidence in her and believes her to be sincere when she assures him that she loves him, and that she leaves him only to avoid poverty. From the beginning it is clearly shown that Manon holds in her hands the destiny of this most faithful lover of all times.

In the novel only, there is Tiberge, the moral mentor who recognizes a lost soul and this vigilant counselor is untiring in his effort to save Des Grieux who turns a deaf ear to his pleadings. There is in the author of *Manon* something of Tiberge as well as a great deal of the Chevalier, for when he was tired of the vain distractions of the world and desired to seek a peaceable retreat, he probably thought of the advice that he has put into the wasted words of Tiberge, whom in the novel we find everywhere; at the arrival of the coach from Arras; at Des Grieux's home; at Saint Sulpice; in the gardens of the Palais-Royal; in the prison of Saint-Lazare; finally at the end when Manon has died, he comes once more to lead Des Grieux back to a virtuous life. Tiberge is what Des Grieux and Prévost himself, in his remorseful moments, wished to be. To offset the story of the Chevalier and Manon, Scribe introduced the hard working, respectable couple, of Gervais and Marguerite. In the other librettos there is no attempt to create a moral atmosphere.

Opposite the good angel in the novel is the demon represented by Lescaut, who appears in all of the librettos as well, sometimes the brother, sometimes the

cousin and in all of them a brutal man, without principles of honor, who hopes to find by the help of Manon, the means of satisfying all his low and depraved tastes. In the novel Lescaut plays a much more important part than in the librettos, likewise Des Grieux's father is not as important a character in the librettos as in the novel, for he appears only twice in the Meilhac and Gille drama and not at all in the other two.

On the whole the librettos by Meilhac and Gille and Puccini, hold rather closely to the original story as told by Prévost, while the libretto by Scribe makes use of the final setting in the novel only, the rest being invested.

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